

Hamilton holds first induction ceremony

Nine junior noncommissioned officers were formally initiated into the NCO Corps during Fort Hamilton's first NCO Induction ceremony at the post theater Jan. 30.

The NCO Induction ceremony is a celebration of the newly promoted joining the ranks of the US Army's professional noncommissioned officer corps and emphasizes and builds on the pride of such an elite corps. It allows fellow NCOs of a unit to build and develop a cohesive bond, support team development and serve as a legacy for future NCO Induction Ceremonies. The ceremony also serves to honor the memory of those men and women of the NCO Corps who have served with pride and distinction.

"What is the importance of a name or a title?" said Command Sgt. Maj. Darryl Robinson, command sergeant major of the New York City Recruiting Battalion and guest speaker. "It's very important in our Army because going from specialist to sergeant, expectations rise. Those who meet and greet you expect that you go through something and are able to overcome and adapt. There is and was a vision for which you are today. Long ago



before many of us joined the Army, there was a vision for who the NCO would lead during this time. Someone asked, 'How do we want our NCOs be like in the 21st century?' They put forth a formal education system so that these future leaders will be able to adapt, train and lead by example.

"You embody what the veterans before you have fought and died for," he continued. "When you get into a position where you are able to make a difference, remember that you are helping to shape the NCOs coming after you who will embody the vision and expectations you set forth long ago."

The Inductees are Sgts. Wilson Alvarado, Jr., Samantha Wolf, Jennifer C. Johnson, Anita A. London, Tracy L. Fenner, Andrew A. Hernandez, James R.

Weidemann, Richard Jackson and Willis A. Wynne.

Staff Sgt. Gilbert Guzman, Jr., spearheaded the event and presented a unique ceremony as each inductee was announced and formally introduced. After the introductions, the new sergeants stepped over the "Time Honored Line," a symbolic yellow rope to signify their first step into the NCO journey of leadership. Then each NCO walked through the portal of crossed sabers to complete their induction.

"I think this was a great opportunity for the installation to see what a NCO is and what we do for each other," Guzman said. "I go to sleep and wake up an NCO and I do it to the best of my ability."

"I felt dignified and it will be a memorable event," said London the Fort Hamilton

garrison. I plan to set forth and continue to do great things and lead Soldiers.”

Jackson, of B Co. 101 Signal Battalion said, “I felt proud, and the ceremony made me feel like it was all worth it.”



Above, newly inducted sergeants present their certificates. Left, Command Sgts. Major Darryl Robinson of the New City Recruiting Battalion and Sylvia Laughlin, Fort Hamilton garrison command sergeant major, observe NCO Corps inductee Sgt. Samantha Wolf sign the NCO Corps roster.

Army seeks to reduce suicide rate

In 2008, suicidal behavior among Soldiers was an all time high. A total of 142 Soldiers, including 13 still pending final determination, took their own lives in 2008. Suicides are occurring across every segment of the force – active, National Guard and reserve; officer and enlisted; deployed and non-deployed and those who have yet to deploy.

Army leadership is committed to reversing the trend of increasing suicidal behavior in the force and has directed a stand down, followed by a deliberate chain teaching program focused on suicide prevention that promotes leadership communication with everyone in their command. Commanders and first line supervisors will engage their Soldiers, DA civilians and Family members in this three-phase training program to increase awareness of suicide risk factors and warning signs and to encourage intervention for at-risk Soldiers.

Phase I consists of a stand-down, which all commands will conduct from Feb. 15 to Mar. 15. National Guard and reserve units lacking a scheduled drill or battle assembly during this 30-day period will complete stand-down by the end of the next scheduled drill or battle assembly. Phase II

consists of chain teach and is conducted from Mar 15 to July. Phase III is sustainment that initiates with Phase I, passes through Phase II and continues indefinitely through annual training requirements.

It is imperative that all Soldiers, DA civilians and Family members understand the individual suicide risk factors and warning signs and take action to intervene on behalf of fellow Soldiers.

Training for Fort Hamilton garrison personnel is scheduled for Mar. 6 and 9 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the post theater. Although temporary, term, part-time and seasonal DA Civilians as well as contractors are not required to attend Army Suicide Prevention Program training events, their attendance is highly encouraged. The Army is committed to protecting the entire force and training to express that fact to everyone. Units deployed are to organize and conduct Army suicide prevention stand-down and chain teach tasks in such a manner that it is meaningful to Soldiers and DA civilians, yet consistent with mission, security and other tactical constraints. Commanders are highly encouraged to resource and permeate suicide prevention into family readiness groups and spouse forums at all levels. Army suicide prevention is a

leadership issue and involvement is expected at every level. This is not business as usual.

Motivate Soldiers to maintain both physical and mental health wellness by enhancing Soldier’s life skills and intervention skills of leaders and junior Soldiers. Engage Army leaders at all levels to foster an environment or reduced stigma associated with seeking mental health care and enhancing the capabilities of Soldiers, DA civilians, Army leaders, their Families and other behavioral health influencers to take necessary action to help Soldiers and DA civilians at risk.

Phase I centers on the “Beyond the Front” video and ACE card and is intended to make an impact with immediate execution. Phase II centers on the “Shoulder to Shoulder” video, ACE card and suicide prevention training tip card and is intended to augment Phase I with a more deliberate and personal approach to training conducted by small unit leaders and first-line supervisors for Soldiers and DA civilians within their responsibility.

The ACE card is available on-line at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/pa/ge/603513>. AKO login is required to access this website.

Commissary agency offers kids scholarships

Commissaries are an integral part of the quality of life offered to service members and their families. The Scholarships for Military Children Program was created in recognition of the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community. It is the intent of the program that a scholarship funded through contributions be awarded annually for each commissary operated by the Defense Commissary Agency worldwide.

The Scholarships for Military Children Program is primarily funded through the generosity of manufacturers and suppliers whose products are sold at military commissaries worldwide. The Fisher House Foundation volunteered to underwrite the administration of this program.

A minimum of one \$1500 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location where qualified applications are received. More than one scholarship per commissary may be available based on response and funding. The scholarship provides for payment of tuition, books, lab fees and other related expenses.

Only dependent unmarried children under age 23 of active duty personnel, reserve/guard and retired military members, or survivors of service members who died while on active duty or survivors of individuals who died while receiving retired pay from the military, may apply for a scholarship. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database and that they have a current ID card. The DEERS database will be the primary method of verifying eligibility.

Applicants must be enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a full-time undergraduate degree program at an accredited college or university in the fall term of 2009.

Applicants who have earned an undergraduate degree or who are enrolled in a graduate degree program are not eligible. All applicants must also have a minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 basis) to be eligible to apply. The minimum GPA requirement applies to both high school and college students. Students attending a community or junior college must be enrolled in a program of studies designed to allow the student to transfer directly into a four-year program. Applicants who receive an appointment to one of the U.S. Military Academies (or affiliated preparatory schools) or are awarded a full scholarship at any accredited U.S. post-secondary institution of higher education are not eligible to receive funds from this program. A full scholarship is usually defined as one that provides for payment of tuition, books, lab fees, and other related expenses.

Applicants, or their sponsors, need not live at an installation that has a commissary. Applicants may submit their application at any commissary, however it is recommended that they submit the application where their sponsors normally shop or closest to where their sponsors live. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure the commissary receives the application. If it is not possible (due to distance considerations) for the applicants to submit their applications in person, they may also mail, UPS, or FedEx their completed applications to the commissary nearest to where their sponsor is stationed. Applicants who choose this method must contact that commissary and obtain the name of a person to whom the package will be directed. (A complete list of commissaries, along with phone numbers, can be found at www.commissaries.com).

Fort Hamilton Announcements

Tax Time

The Fort Hamilton Legal Office has expanded the number of days per week that we are offering free electronic tax filing. Our tax program now offers federal and state electronic tax filing appointments Monday through Thursday. Appointments are available for all active duty military, retirees, and family members. This filing season, more people are eligible to make tax-deductible contributions to a traditional IRA due to an increase in the income limits. The deduction is phased out for singles and heads of household who are covered by a workplace retirement plan and have modified adjusted gross incomes between \$53,000 and \$63,000. For married couples filing jointly, the income phase-out range is \$85,000 to \$105,000.

Scheduled Demolitions

Demolitions of buildings 213, 216 and 216A have been completed. Following the demolition of 213, demolition of building 211 will begin next week. Sorting debris from recyclables and hauling material from Ft. Hamilton will continue at the 213 site for a few weeks. Demolition of Building 136 is scheduled for the week of March 23. In preparation for the demolition of the high rise buildings, the current construction fence around 136 and 138 will be relocated into the center of the cul-de-sac, eliminating parking from this area.

FERS

A bill introduced in the House recently would allow workers in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to cash out their unused sick leave upon retirement. The benefit also would apply to employees covered under the Foreign Service Pension System and U.S. Postal Service retirement plan. FERS employees currently cannot count unused sick leave toward their retirement annuity. Employees hired before 1984 are covered under the Civil Service Retirement System and do receive such credit for unused sick leave. The new legislation, introduced by Rep. James Moran, D-Va., would provide FERS employees with a benefit equal to that of their CSRS counterparts, allowing them to add any unused sick leave to the number of years they have worked in the government to determine their annuity at retirement.

NCO Breakfast

Col. Stephen V. Smith and Command Sgt Maj. Sylvia P. Laughlin are hosting a Year of the Noncommissioned Officer Breakfast March 5 at 7 a.m. at the Fort Hamilton Community Club. For more information, please contact Debra Williams-Robinson at (718) 630-4057.

Veterans Upward Bound Program

Many veterans usually avoid going to college because it's been years since they've been to school and many believe they won't relate to a younger student population. The Veteran's Upward Bound program at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, (Queens) is a FREE U.S. Department of Education program created to help veterans refresh their academic skills and give them the confidence to successfully obtain a college degree. With the Post-9/11 GI Bill coming on-line this August 2009, many veterans will be taking advantage of obtaining a college education and this program is designed to help give them the head start they need to succeed with college-level work. You do NOT have to attend LaGuardia Community College after completion of the program. You can attend the CUNY or private College/University of your choice and we can help get you started! LaGuardia's Veterans Upward Bound program is one of only 39 colleges and universities across the United States funded by the Department of Education to help veterans improve their skills in Reading/Literature/Composition, Mathematics, Computer Basics and GED preparation classes. For more information, or to find out if your eligible, please contact Edith Segovia at (718) 482-5231.

Annual Scholarship Competition available for Federal employees and families

Federal Employees Education and Assistance sponsors the only annual, merit-based contest open only to civilian federal and postal employees, their spouses and college-age children. Awards range from \$500-\$7,500 for one year, and FEEA also administers a number of special scholarships. Current civilian federal, postal employees with at least three years of federal service, their children and spouses are eligible to enroll. Dependent applicants may first apply as high school seniors and must be full-time students. Employees may be part-time. The course of study must lead to a two-year, four-year or graduate degree with a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Applications for the FEEA scholarships are due by March 27. The application and other eligibility requirements are available on the FEEA web site: www.feea.org and the Federal Executive Board web site: www.newyorkcity.feb.gov.

Balfour Beatty shows its appreciation

Balfour Beatty Communities, responsible for the privatized family housing here at Fort Hamilton has formed Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to honoring military personnel – active, disabled and fallen – and their families.

The Foundation's primary goals are to promote a spirit of appreciation and remembrance by providing places for communal gathering and reflection at various sites Balfour Beatty Communities serve; to assist returning service members who have become disabled and now require specially-adapted homes; and to promote the pursuit of education and a commitment to community leadership through educational scholarships to the children of its active duty service members that live in Balfour Beatty Communities family housing.

Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation is excited to begin its scholarship program. The Foundation will offer scholarships that reward high school or undergraduate students in need of financial assistance,

recognizing not only their educational and leadership efforts, but also the contribution of their parents and the sacrifices the children have made in their parents' absences.

Balfour Beatty Communities is encouraging its family housing residents' high school students to apply for these scholarships which are valued from \$1,000 to \$2,500. The application, details and requirements can be found at www.bbcommunitiesfoundation.org. The application deadline is March 15.

Balfour Beatty Communities is an industry leader in privatized housing committed to providing a quality living environment that supports the diverse interests and needs of its military families at 44 installations around the country.

According to Bruce Robinson, president and CEO of Balfour Beatty Communities, "The Foundation is our way of saying thank you to those who risk everything and sacrifice so much for our freedom."

Valentine's Day Match Making

Contestants for the Valentine's Day speed dating event get to know each other in five-minute intervals at the Fort Hamilton Community Club Feb. 13. The BOSS fund-raiser was able to match about 80 percent of the 28 contestants.

